

# Our Work is Equity Work:



## Assessment as a Partner for Equity

Dr. Erick Montenegro & Dr. Natasha Jankowski  
October 2022

Think, Pair, ~~Share~~  
...

How has your assessment changed over the last  
three to five years?

# Equity and Assessment

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# Dominant Elements of Assessment

1. Most of the standardized measures and theories utilized come from studies of white students in mostly white institutions – this is not challenged.
2. Certain demonstrations of learning are valued over others, and in this way, speech and learning demonstration is limited.
3. Narrative or personal experience is not valued in the same way for institutional decision making as quantitative data.
4. Students are not considered experts of their own experience and student voice is rationalized away.

# Equitable Assessment

At its core, equitable assessment calls for those who lead and participate in assessment activities to work to ensure that assessment does not feed into cycles that perpetuate inequities but serve to bring more equity into higher education. This requires involving students.

~Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017, 2020



National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

January 2017

## Equity and Assessment: Moving Towards Culturally Responsive Assessment

Erick Montenegro and Natasha A. Jankowski



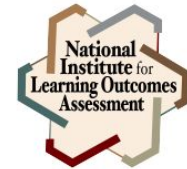
Occasional Paper #29

[www.learningoutcomesassessment.org](http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org)

How consequential can assessment be to learning when assessment approaches may not be inclusive of diverse learners?

January 2020

Nº 42



## A New Decade for Assessment: Embedding Equity into Assessment Praxis

Erick Montenegro  
& Natasha A. Jankowski

[www.learningoutcomesassessment.org](http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org)

Explored what equitable assessment is and is not, challenges/opportunities for this work, and future directions for the decade ahead.

# Equity in Assessment

## Check

Check biases and ask reflective questions throughout the data analysis process to address assumptions and positions of privilege

## Use

Use multiple sources of evidence appropriate for the students being supported and the related learning experience or support offering

## Include

Include student perspectives and take action based on those shared perspectives

## Increase

Increase transparency in results and actions taken  
  
Invite alternative interpretations

## Ensure

Ensure collected data are meaningfully disaggregated and interrogated

## Make

Make evidence-based changes that address issues of equity that are context specific

# Assessment During a Pandemic

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August 2020



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## Assessment During A Crisis: Responding to a Global Pandemic

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Natasha A. Jankowski

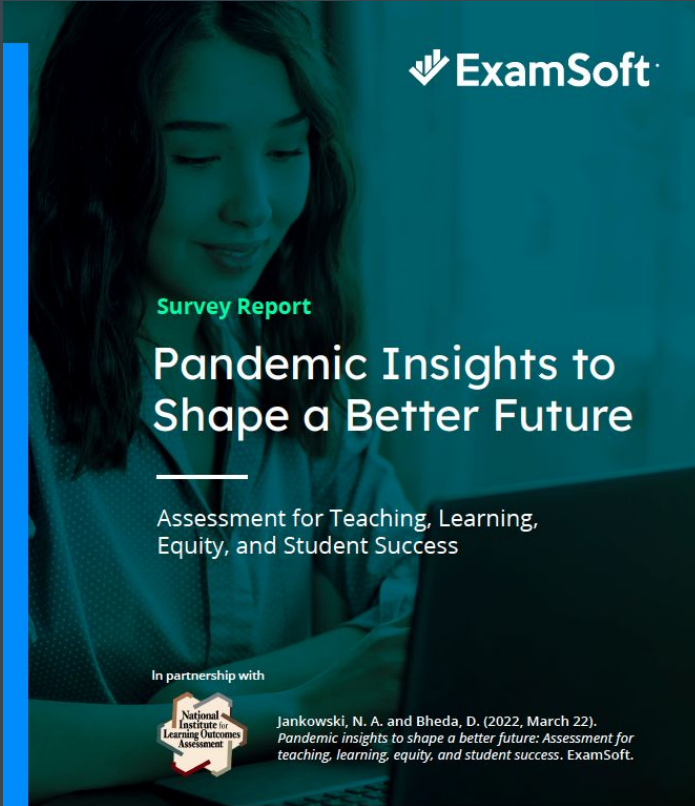


# 2020 COVID SURVEY

1. Holistic awareness of student needs
2. Equity concerns
3. Wide-scale professional development
4. Return to assessment basics
5. Fatigue

# 2022 Survey Highlights

1. Learning was negatively impacted
2. To move forward collaboration is key
3. Students need to be at the center
4. Equity is the driver



The image shows the cover of a survey report. At the top right is the ExamSoft logo. The background features a woman with long dark hair looking down at a laptop. The text on the cover includes the title 'Pandemic Insights to Shape a Better Future', the subtitle 'Assessment for Teaching, Learning, Equity, and Student Success', and the partnership with the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. At the bottom right, the authors 'Jankowski, N. A. and Bheda, D. (2022, March 22)' and the title of their work are listed.

ExamSoft

Survey Report

## Pandemic Insights to Shape a Better Future

Assessment for Teaching, Learning, Equity, and Student Success

In partnership with

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

Jankowski, N. A. and Bheda, D. (2022, March 22). *Pandemic insights to shape a better future: Assessment for teaching, learning, equity, and student success*. ExamSoft.

examsoft.com

# Navigating Life in 2022

65% feeling unmotivated

58% difficulty concentrating

50% mental health concerns

48% feeling behind academically

18% housing concerns



# 86%

agreed that humanizing practices and restorative approaches should guide classroom policies and communications

# 81%

agreed that racial equity and social justice should guide institutional and programmatic practices





# REFRAMING ASSESSMENT TO CENTER



*THEORIES, MODELS,  
AND PRACTICES*

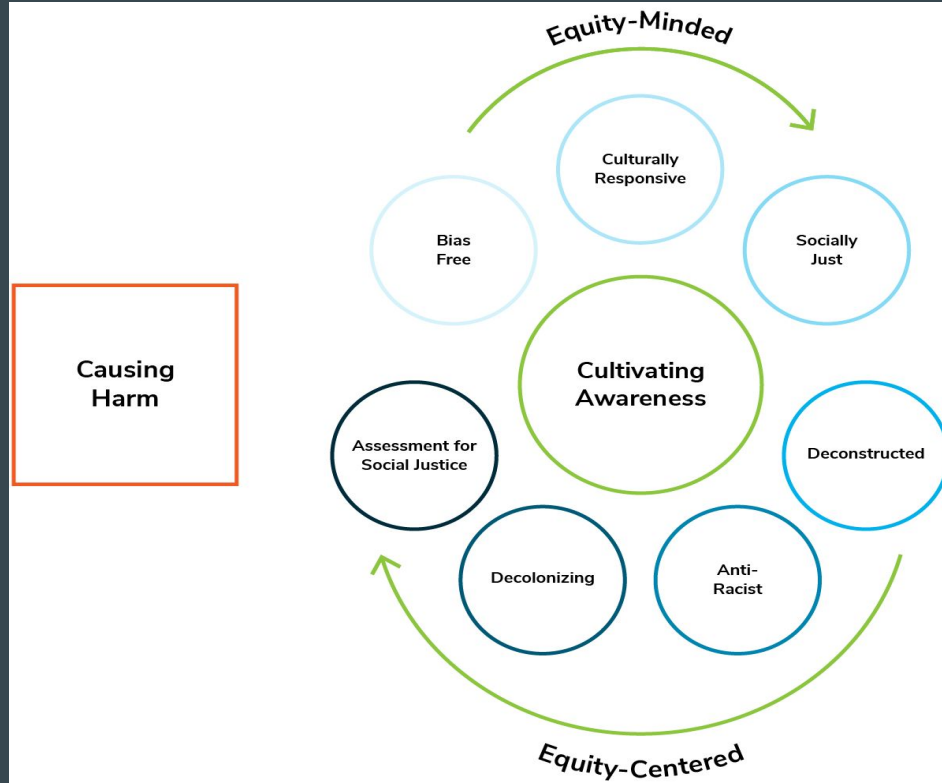
EDITED BY GAVIN W. HENNING,  
GIANINA R. BAKER, NATASHA A. JANKOWSKI,  
ANNE E. LUNDQUIST, AND ERICK MONTENEGRO



# Issues in Need of Attention 2022-2025

1. The role of students in assessment.
2. The relationship between cheating, proctoring, and assessment.
3. Technology usage in support of learning.
4. Trusted evidence sources and equitable data use.
5. Assessment as an equitable pedagogical practice.

# Quick Overview of the Literature



**EMERGING APPROACHES:**  
FEMINIST ASSESSMENT  
HEALING-CENTERED ASSESSMENT  
MINDFUL ASSESSMENT

Framework for Equity-Minded and Equity-Centered Assessment (Lundquist & Henning, 2021)

# Book Sections

- **Part 1:** Why is the intersection of assessment and equity important?
- **Part 2:** What are the literature, models, and approaches to equity and assessment?
- **Part 3:** How can equity-centered assessment be implemented, what does it look like?
- **Part 4:** Now What

# The Many Roles of Assessment Professionals

Equity  
Champion

Ally

Activist

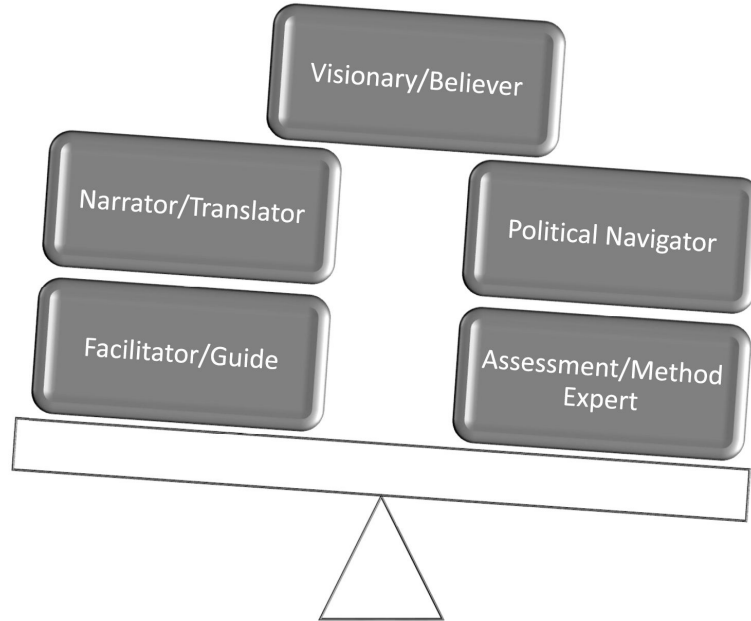


FIG. 1 Representation of assessment practitioner roles.

“I feel people here wear like 2 and ½ hats. I mean the joke I made around the holidays was we should just get everyone an extra hat rack for their holiday gift because we could all use it, right? So, **there’s plenty of time-strapped people, and it can be a serious tension for new initiatives across the campus.** But a good way to overcome that is **letting people see right off the bat they will be part of a team. It won’t be just them trying to figure this out while also doing their actual job responsibilities.**”

-George  
(Montenegro, 2020)

**“We are rebuilding the plane while flying it without trying to harm anyone. That, to me, that’s the essence of living equity; of living social justice; of doing assessment from an equity stance. And it shows the immediacy and importance of this work...But our students are already on their way, right? They’re already here and if we don’t do this right and in time, then they can be harmed. Inequities are harming them. So we need people that understand this urgency, that are dedicated to this immediate issue, and are willing to go the extra mile to ensure we don’t do harm...And know that if we do this well, we can potentially influence the success of students who are identified as ‘at opportunity’.**

-Emma  
(Montenegro, 2020)

“I feel like, if you’re equity-minded or equity-driven, then what gets you to implement it should or doesn’t even need to be an initiative specifically aimed at equity. Because so much of it—**what it means to be an effective person committed to equity—is in your day-to-day actions** in your regular work. It’s how you go out of your way to include people. It’s how you make decisions. It’s how you, like, engage and talk to people. I think that’s how you demonstrate that you value [equity] and have a commitment to equity. It’s not through a structured thing. **It’s not because someone said to do it. And it’s not just doing what they said, either. It’s by going beyond and exploring that which isn’t yet explored because it might make a difference for students not getting a fair return or a fair outcome.**”

-Beth  
(Montenegro, 2020)



# Role of the Organization: Intentional Culture of Assessment

## Intentionality:

- the mental ability to stand for something and act; to link one's inner consciousness, preferences, and perceptions with appropriate action relative to a desired purpose (Jacob, 2019).
- central element of human action that leads people to execute with purpose (Bonet, 2020) to achieve the task at hand (Schultz, 1953).

“...I think sometimes there's a gap that some faculty and staff can't really speak to that intentionality because they're used to that other system, right? **That system that's usually predominantly white where you need to be told to disaggregate your data, to talk about those different populations and how they're doing.** And then someone has to [ask] *‘why are we not doing that here?’* ...Here, just our student demographics alone dictate and require it. In taking a look at our outcomes and the support services that we put in place, I mean [equity] **is embedded completely in our work. Nobody has to be told anymore.** But, you know, again it's all [about] how people are [going to] frame and notice it. Sometimes people have to be told over and over to do something, but is that really authentic?”

-Frank  
(Montenegro, 2020)

“Something that’s naturally evolved but we’re targeting more this year to be more articulate and intentional about, is the **partnership between academic and student affairs**. We have student success meetings where faculty, coaches, and advisors participate...we also make sure that one member of each side of the house are **co-leading the meeting** with their diverse perspectives but from the same goal in mind: **the goal is student success**. One person approaching it from the academic side one person from the student context and co-curricular. **Together approaching it from the holistic side**. So everything that can be brought into the conversation about student success and assessment is invited in.”

-James  
(Montenegro, 2020)

# Meaningful Disaggregation

1. purpose in the types of assessment data collected to allow for meaningful disaggregation to occur (Can't disaggregate data you don't have)
2. meaningful disaggregation requires purposeful exploration by asking questions that can help reveal inequities (going deeper than face value, interrogating data, intersectionality)
3. requires intentional use of disaggregated data to improve the disparate outcomes afflicting specific groups of students (Create lasting change)

**The short-term action:** following-through and analyzing data through an equity lens.

**The lasting action:** using those data to then address inequities; to do something about what was uncovered in the data by also using data to inform changes in policy and practice..

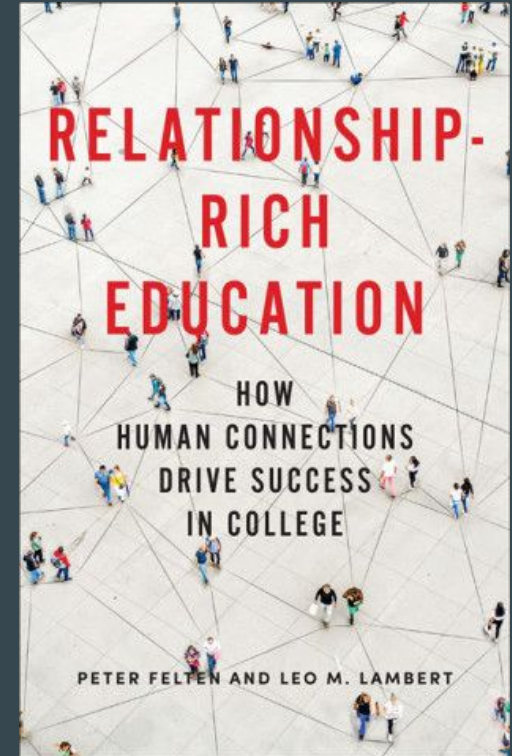
“We’ve been collecting a lot of data. A lot. And so now we want to ask ourselves ‘**what kind of data are we collecting?**’ ‘**What data do we need now?**’ ‘**What are we missing and for who?**’ Because before we just needed data to do these analyses and begin to [understand], but now that we’re making changes, and realize we need to look deeper, **the nature of the data needs to change. As student change that data needs to reflect them...**”

-Fernando  
(Montenegro, 2020)

# Relationship-Rich Education (Felten & Lambert (2020))

Students' interactions with peers, faculty, and staff positively influence the breadth and depth of student learning, retention, and graduation rates, and a wide range of other outcomes including critical thinking, identity development, communication skills, and leadership abilities

1. Every student must experience genuine welcome and deep care. (value and belonging)
2. Every student must be inspired to learn. (not transactional)
3. Every student must develop a web of significant relationships. (mentors, advising)
4. Every student must explore questions of meaning and purpose. (becoming part of a discipline)



# Mattering

**Attention.** This is the sense that you are noticed by your presence or your absence. It matters that you are in a class or at a meeting, or that you missed the class or meeting.

**Ego Extension.** Whether your failures or successes matter to others and whether they will be proud of success and saddened by failure. In special-purpose institutions, every success or failure is taken seriously by the institution and has significance for the larger community.

**Dependence.** The sense that the group or others are depending on you for something facilitates involvement, belonging, and engagement.

**Appreciation.** Mattering is manifest as well when your efforts are appreciated. If they are ignored, overlooked, or discounted, feelings of marginalization will be increased.

~Smith 2015

# Research argues...

If assessment is about enhancing student learning as opposed to simply documenting it, then involving students is a vital approach to ensuring learning occurs (Brown, 2017).

Pastore and Pentassuglia (2015) state, “assessment is a ‘silent practice’, closed and not shared with students: a *silent assessment* that loses its empowerment and formative chance both for teachers and for students” (p. 418).

If students viewed assessment tasks as not relevant, disconnected from goals, and unfair - students disengaged from the assessment and did not experience deeper learning or reinforced sense of belonging (Boud, 2017; Martens, Spruijt, Wolfhagen, Whittingham, & Dolmans, 2019)

Without student involvement, students report finding assessment to be an act of vulnerability involving “Laying oneself bare to be judged by a jury that does not understand you and won’t tell you what they want to see” (Heipp, 2016, p. 136)

Impacts how students view themselves as learners or capable of learning (Falchikov, 2005).



# Get Involved in Shaping the Future

Contribute to the discussions

Introduce another area in need of exploration and advancement

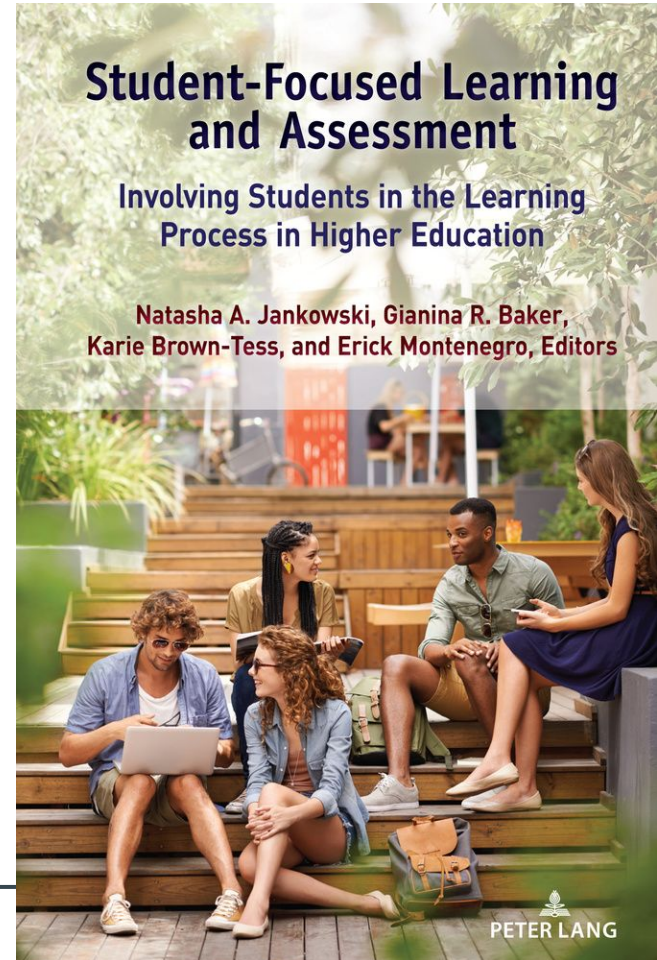
Interrogate policies and practices

Write, present, and share

Engage with regional or context specific associations

Join and chime in on listservs

How do you do it?



# TRANSPARENCY IN ASSIGNMENTS

Transparency in Learning and Teaching: <https://tilthighered.com/>

## *Purpose*

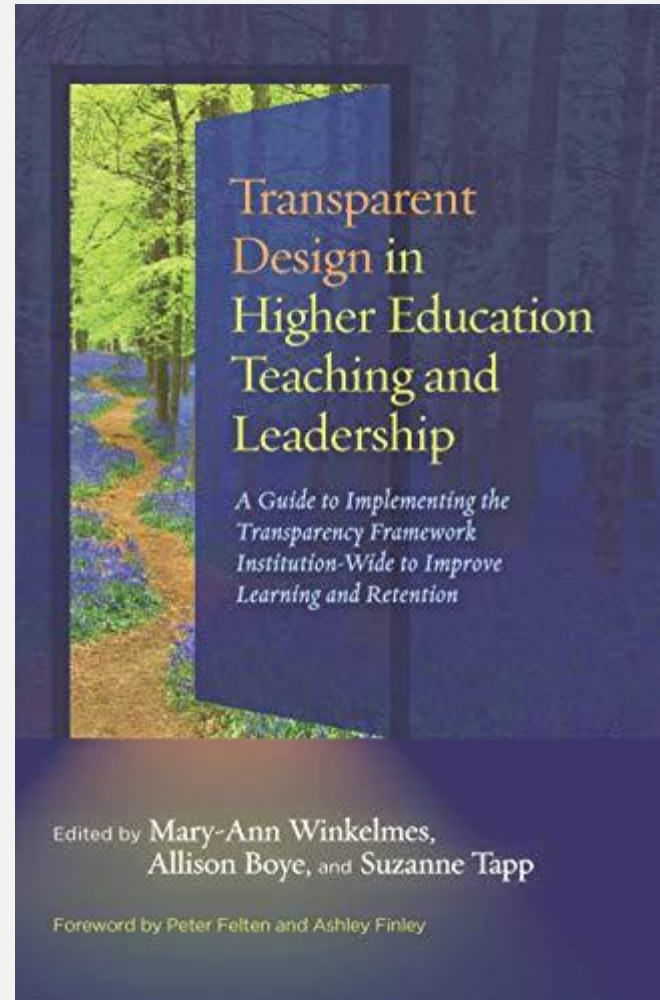
- Skills you'll practice by doing this assignment
- Content knowledge you'll gain from doing this assignment
- How you can use these in your life beyond the context of this course, in and beyond college

## **Task**

- What to do
- How to do it (Are there recommended steps? What roadblocks/mistakes should you avoid?)

## **Criteria**

- (Are you on the right track? How to know you're doing what's expected?)



# ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS

- What learning outcomes will students demonstrate from this task or experience? How does it need to be modified to better align with the learning outcomes of interest?
- Thinking about task or experience from the point of view of students, what would make the purpose clearer to students?
- How does this task or experience allow for flexible options, alternative demonstrations, and/or culturally responsive demonstrations of learning?
- How does it need to be modified or adjusted to reflect current staff and student circumstances and situations?
- What unnecessary constraints, if any, may need to be removed to accommodate learning in a post-pandemic or pandemic transition environment?

# Examining Equity Gaps in Assignment Types

by Harriet Hobbs and Christine Robinson

- Is there a relationship between assignment type, grades, and student demographics?
- Examined the ways in which assignment types may privilege certain groups of students over others
- Examined utility value and inclusive content

# Centering 'Āina in Assessment: Striving for Equity and Social Justice

by Monica Stitt-Bergh, Charmaine Mangram, Eunice Leung Brekke, Kana Plamann Wagoner, Monique Chyba, Kaiwipunikauikawēkiu Lipe, and Siobhán Ni Dhonacha

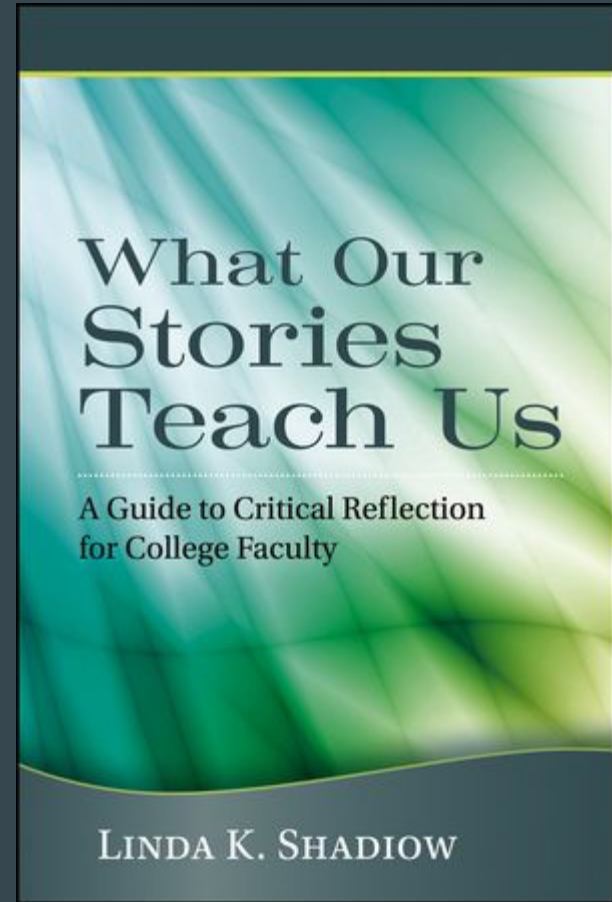
- Importance of place and connecting assessment to place and allowing space for multiple worldviews
- Decolonizing assessment by incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems, people, and land
- Leads to improved outcomes for Native Hawaiian students
- Share stories of how incorporate place into student conversations, assignments, and coursework

# Faculty Beliefs about Students

Participants' beliefs about their students were shaped by how they perceive their personal identities. Their individual perceptions regarding these identity categories seemed to be influenced by the way they were treated by their teachers when they were young at school (Nawrocki, 2015)

How do I see myself as  
a person?

How does that relate to  
how I see myself as a  
faculty member?

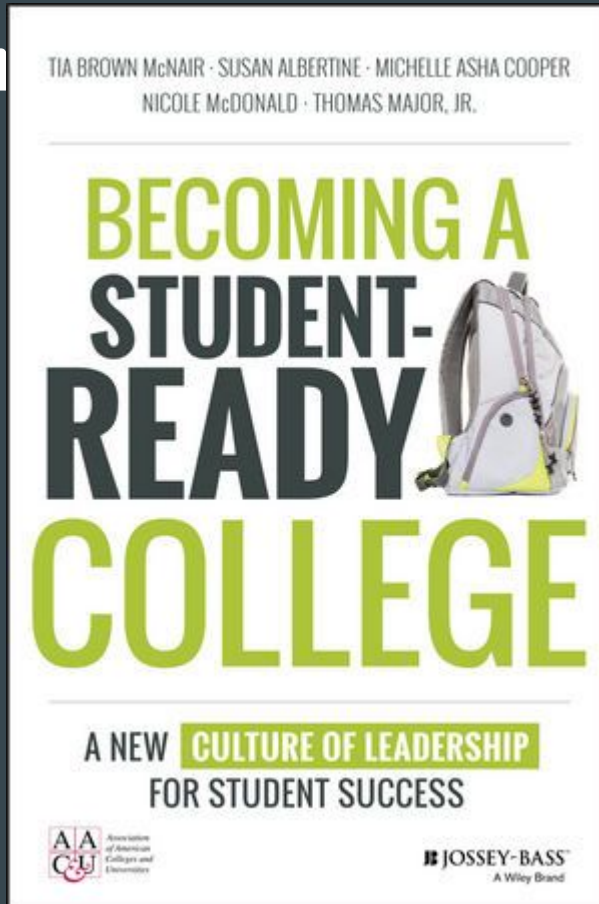




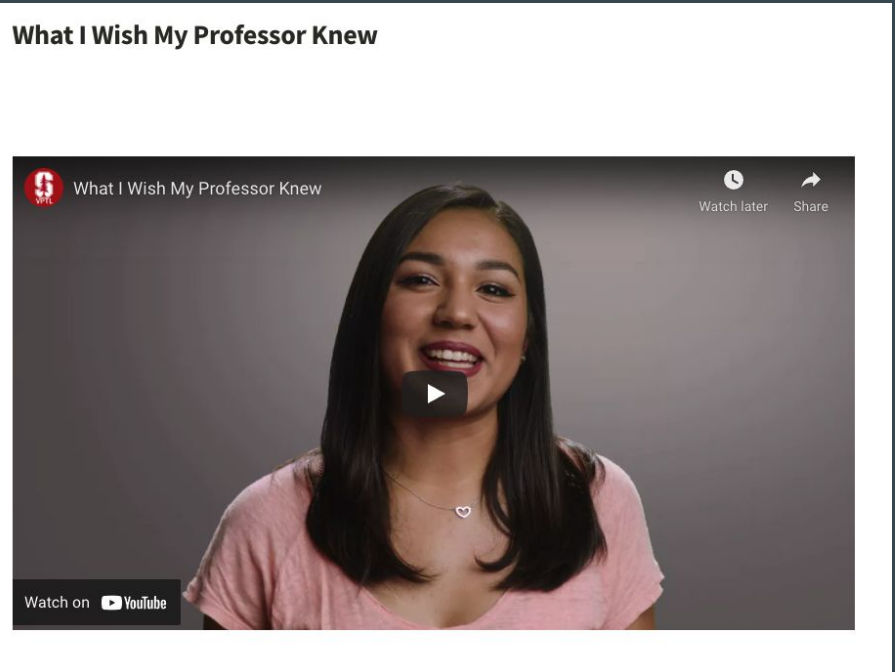
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Adapted from Kristina J. Doubet and Jessica A. Hockett (2015)

Q & A

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# Contact Us

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